In order to facilitate the technology assessment and refinement and its transfer, the ICAR has established a network of 451 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country till the end of 2004-05. During the period, besides conducting a large number of on-farm trials and frontline demonstrations, 22.36 lakh farmers and extension personnel were benefited through training and other extension activities organized by the KVKs. In addition to 7491 tonnes of seeds, 59.90 lakh seedlings/saplings/livestock strains, produced by the various KVKs were made available to the farmers.

Agricultural growth

†1270. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agricultural growth rate has come down to 1.5 per cent from its desired target of 4 per cent during the last three years since the beginning of the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether it is a fact that necessary and required investment has been constantly decreasing in agricultural sector since 1980 alongwith critical decrease in agricultural research; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to bring desired improvement in agricultural sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) According to the data released by the Central Statistical Organization, the average growth rate in agriculture sector including allied sectors of forestry & logging, and fishing in real terms at (1993-94 prices) during the first three years of the Tenth Five Yeal Plan was 1.2% as against the targeted growth rate of 4%.

(b) Successive Five Year Plans have witnessed a steady decline in public investment (measured in terms of gross capital formation) in real terms in agriculture including allied sectors of forestry, logging and fishing. Analysis of trends in public investment in agriculture revealed that it declined in real terms (at 1993-94 prices) from Rs. 35640 crore during the Sixth Plan (1980—85) to Rs. 28793 crore during the Seventh Plan (1985—90) to Rs. 25298 crore during the Ninth Plan (1997—2002). As regards outlay on Agricultural Research and Education, it is categorized

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

under the revenue component, which is not counted as part of investment measured in terms of statistics of gross capital formation-compiled by Central Statistical Organization. The decline in gross capital formation referred to above is essentially investment in irrigation.

As per the Ninth and Tenth Plan Documents of the Planning Commission, the plan outlay for the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) was Rs. 3377 crores during the Ninth Plan and Rs. 5368 crore during the Tenth Plan. Keeping in view the importance of agricultural research, the plan outlay has been raised by 15% from Rs. 1000 crore in 2004-05 to Rs. 1150 crore in the year 2005-06.

(c) Keeping in view the importance of Agriculture in the economy, the Union Budget 2005-06 has provided substantial outlays in areas like horticulture and irrigation including micro irrigation. The Budget has provided Rs. 630 crore in 2005-06 for National Horticulture Mission, which will ensure end-to-end approach having backward and forward linkages covering research, production, post harvest management, processing and marketing, under one umbrella, in an integrated manner. The Budget has provided Rs. 4800 crore for Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme for 2005-06 compared with Rs. 2800 crore in 2004-05. With a view to improving water use efficiency in Indian agriculture, the Budget has provided Rs. 400 crore for promoting micro irrigation in 2005-06. since the flow of credit is important in accelerating the pace of investment in agriculture, the disbursement of agricultural credit is proposed to be stepped up by 30% per cent from commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks to the agriculture sector in 2005-06. The measures are expected to lead to a reversal of the deceleration in agricultural growth.

Policy for doubling agricultural production

1271. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a declining trend in the growth rate of agriculture and the performance of agriculture has been disturbing;

(b) whether in such a situation, there is a policy initiated to double our agricultural production in ten years; and